meet the salaries^vages of its employees till its order book position improves; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to save the Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. From financial crisis?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Hindustan Shipyard Limited has been able to improve order book position by taking steps such as resorting to aggressive marketing, increasing ship repair turn over, rationalisation of manpower, phasing out unproductive expenditure and reducing overheads. Government has been extending its support to the shipyard in procurement of orders. Government of Andhra Pradesh has been requested to consider waiver of sales tax for a period of 5 years.

Airport at Hassan (Karnataka)

*334. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the project for an airport at Hassan (Karnataka) was inaugurated around 2 years back but the work has yet to be taken up after land acquisition;

(b) the details of the amount and the time schedule to complete the project; and

(c) by what time the project will be completed in view of the present speed of implementation?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) The foundation stone was laid on 23.8.1996 for development of airport at Hassan.

(b) and (c) The Planning Commission was approached to provide budgetary support, however, the same was not forthcoming. As per the Policy on Airport Infrastructure, no green field airport is allowed within an aerial distance of 150 kms. of an existing airport. Mangalore and Bangalore airports are located at a distance of 111) kms. and 150 kms. respectively from Hassan.